

LOREDANA CUZMICI, *Generația Albatros – o nouă avangardă* [*The Albatros Generation – A New Avant-garde*], Iași, Editura Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, 2015, 381 p.

In her book titled *Generația Albatros – o nouă avangardă* [*The Albatros Generation – A New Avant-garde*], Loredana Cuzmici analyses the time-expanded work of several writers associated, as reviewers or merely collaborators, with the literary journal *Albatros*. Although its very short-lived existence only spanned between March and June 1941, thus summing up 7 issues, the journal remains up to this day a milestone of Romanian literary history, not necessarily for the intrinsic value of its writers, but especially for the cultural contexts that both shaped its profile and urged its untimely demise. In the course of 1941, the neo-avant-garde wave emerging in the pages of *Albatros* had to negotiate its ideological terms, traditionally inclined to the Left, with the (extreme-)Right movements then at lead in the Romanian political and cultural life. The posthumous fate of *Albatros*, as seen through the subsequent works of its writers, would be no less contradictory. The post-war years witnessed the rapid ascent and institutionalization of the Left, but the communist orthodoxy established in the literary life, as elsewhere, dealt in an ambiguous manner with the *Albatros* writers, regarding them alternately as harbingers of the new world and as a nest of “aesthetic reactionaries”. To make matters more twisted, some former *Albatros* writers aligned with the new dogma, their writing being sometimes irretrievably caught under its rhetorical pangs, while others used the space of exile to criticize publicly both the regime and their remaining peers who had fallen under its spell.

It is indeed curious that only a handful of monographs, more or less partial, with little, if any, critical appeal, have been devoted to this challenging topic, beside the usual literary dictionaries whose treatment of the matter is understandably sketchy. Therefore, Loredana Cuzmici must be acknowledged for having recomposed the big picture and for having traced in detail the meandering history of *Albatros* writers, both in their shared principles and their individual, diverging paths.

The researcher is right to assume that the given topic is “ideology-dependent” and, thus, should be approached by combining “extrinsic and intrinsic” methods, by switching from contextualization to close reading. She also points out correctly that the history of *Albatros* undergoes three stages of reception – namely: 1941, 1947-1989 (with several sub-stages), respectively, contemporary – which must be treated separately. However, rather dazzlingly, she undermines her first assertion, by openly opting for what she calls “subjective criticism”, “pseudo-criticism” or “first-person criticism”, out of a too great dismay for the “demon of theory” and for the “utopia of objective, vigilante criticism”. Neither does she remain entirely faithful to the second point mentioned. Rather than focusing on bigger cultural paradigms, the book chapters are organized traditionally around writers themselves. As a consequence of that, the researcher will need to unfold in every particular case the changing attitudes towards Left, Right, subjection or subversion, reform or reaction.

The first chapter of the book deals with the specific interval of the journal’s publication (1941) and approaches collectively the writers involved. Within the larger context of “war generation writers”, Loredana Cuzmici distinguishes the literary nucleus of *Albatros* by its “militant avant-garde formula”, prone to the deconstruction of high literature and to a reconversion of art to reality. This late, second-term avant-garde is, however, more “eclectic” and “tame” than its interwar prototype, both in stylistic terms, which prove softer views upon tradition, and in ideological principles, which never seem to confirm the “Leftist myth” woven around the journal. Loredana Cuzmici observes that *Albatros* writers range from “young communists” to “self-declared extreme-Right partisans”, but rather contradictorily, she then concludes that the journal does not issue “explicitly ideological signals”. As a matter of fact, the researcher seems rather keen to de-ideologize *Albatros* writers,

although the very manner in which she depicts them – as “ostentatiously literary in a violently politicized society”, as literates evading “from history” into the “aesthetic” – remains sensibly informed by neoliberal, Right views.

The following chapters abandon the collective approach in favour of case studies, each of them conceived as smaller-sized monographs. In every case, Loredana Cuzmici operates chronologically, follows closely the writers’ intricate literary biographies and analyses their works, with a certain preference for thematic methods. As a principle, her main concern is to assert every time the literary value – which is a case to be made especially when writers would subject to socialist realism – and, subsequently, to rehabilitate names unjustly forgotten by our literary history.

Such is the case, first, of Mircea Streinul, an author whose openly nationalistic and extreme-Right views can’t hinder entirely the partial, but nevertheless significant aesthetic worth of his prose. While Streinul died right before the advent of the communist regime, Ben. Corlaciuc’s wider work raises much more complex axiological debates. Driven by literary ambition and by the need of being accepted, Corlaciuc seems to have written “in favour of all regimes he has witnessed”. If, during war, he is evidently influenced by Nazi propaganda, after 1945, Corlaciuc starts to support Communism, while his later exile would turn him back to a more democratic right. Loredana Cuzmici weighs upon Corlaciuc’s successive formulas of writing, from modernist poetry to socialist-realist prose and opinion texts. As expected, she deems the latter “sad documents of literary failure” and considers that several of Corlaciuc’s poems, written outside the break of socialist realism, “can survive without contextualization”.

The greatest poet of the *Albatros* group, Geo Dumitrescu, is analysed in the fourth chapter of the book. Although covering two decades, his militant publishing is easier to overlook – or, at least, to be regarded, with Ierunca’s words, as “idealistic naïveté” – because Dumitrescu’s lyrical value, and the extent of his literary legacy, are undebatable. His poems can be read within the frame of various currents (from avant-garde to Romanticism and even postmodernism), whereas his core adhesion to a formula of realism and directness has stood the test of time, when confronted with the falsified “realism” of the 50s and in what concerns Dumitrescu’s influence upon poetic generations after the 80s.

The most famous exile of the group, Virgil Ierunca, is discussed in the fifth chapter of the study. The vocal speaker of Free Europe and tireless moral arbiter of our post-war literary life has had a mixed reception in Romania which oscillated between “criticism and high praise”. Undoubtedly, Loredana Cuzmici sides with the latter. She observes that, even if Ierunca is “a writer without a work”, whose essays barely have a “system”, his “biographical-sociological criticism” and “moral” line of argumentation are no less relevant even if they fall outside purely aesthetic considerations. With his call for “social responsibility”, expressed in an often vehement tone, Ierunca is depicted here as a sort of apostle of democracy.

On the other hand, the aesthetic beats again the ideology in the sixth chapter of the study. Its protagonist, Dinu Pillat, is analysed mainly through his much-delayed 2010 novel *Așteptând ceasul de apoi* [*Waiting for the Doomsday*], which dwells upon Romanian intellectuals’ fascination with the extreme Right. However, Loredana Cuzmici argues that Pillat’s narrator is “unaccusable” and his narrative goes beyond the “borders of immediate history”, focusing instead on the process of “ideological de-formation”. It can be thus considered a novel of “interiority and atmosphere” and read in terms of “retro-modernism”.

Finally, the last analytic chapter reassesses a very little-known volume of short stories published in 1971 by Marin Sârbulescu, a symptomatic example of “the double intention of language” that defined Romanian literature under Communism. Although apparently nurtured by socialist realism, the former *Albatros* collaborator has produced here, in fact, an “avant-garde work” characterized by “à rebours attitudes and vision”.

In the concluding remarks, Loredana Cuzmici comes full circle to the point she had made in the introduction – but less developed all along – that the *Albatros* generation was defined by “the context” and that all its members’ works bear, one way or another, the imprint of historical conditions

in which they were written and published. However, Loredana Cuzmici's own focus was less on that "context" and more oriented towards literary-critical goals. In what regards the latter, the researcher has helped reassess several writers (Streinu, Corlăciu, Sârbolescu) and has reconfirmed the literary-historical value of the *Albatros* group as a whole.

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OVIDIU BURUIANĂ, *Liberalii. Structuri și sociabilități politice liberale în România interbelică* [*The Liberals. Liberal Structures and Liberal Political Sociabilities in the Interwar Romania*], Iași, Editura Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, 2013, 694 p.

Providing a critical analysis of previous works devoted to Romanian liberalism and striking a balance with abundant scholarship on Romanian Conservatism, Ovidiu Buruiană's book, *Liberalii. Structuri și sociabilități politice liberale în România interbelică* [*The Liberals. Liberal Structures and Liberal Political Sociabilities in the Interwar Romania*], succeeds in adjusting to the topic's challenges through an uncompromising concentration on the complex device of *political sociability*. Simply put, the author is interested to devise a mechanism that gears up an idiomatic figure (the Romanian Liberal) and the progression of a political community through modern history (the Romanian Liberal Party, later on called The National Liberal Party – PNL).

Unlike fellow historians, Ovidiu Buruiană prefers to unfold the logic of political figures. The "figural" interpretation should be understood not only in terms of interest for the portrait of the generic "Liberal", but also in terms of focus on the specific *Form(s)-of-life* ("Lebensform" or "Lebensformen" in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*) that prop(s) up the expanded liberal community. As everywhere in Europe, the liberal allegiance in general should not be confused with explicit party membership; on the contrary, it should rather be looked for in implicit stances such as liberal families, tradition, profession, and proximity. Profiting from the perspectives introduced by the volumes edited by Jean-Michel de Waele (2003) and Pascal Delwit (2003), Ovidiu Buruiană enlarges upon the recurrent theme of the party's unity, which, according to the aforementioned references, seems to individualize Central and Eastern-European liberalisms. Whereas in these regions of Europe the parties are stamped by organizational fragility, and whereas the concept of "party" itself has been proven reluctant to operationalization, it is perfectly comprehensible why the stake of the present research is to discern beyond the myth of the Liberals' party discipline. For that matter, the author of the present volume is trying to figure out how ideological "certainty" is being constructed among the Romanian Liberals within the given cultural and social framework of interwar period. Then, what are the "certainties" that get reinforced within the frame of a liberal Form-of-Life in the interwar Romania?

Aiming so high, the historian must say farewell to the traditional tools of historiography and devise an analytical dispositive that puts together a view on the development of political culture in Romania and a fine grip of sociological categories. Therefore, the first chapter is devoted to liberal ideas and liberal identity during the specified period. Ovidiu Buruiană departs from the thesis of "received liberalism", and seeks for a Romanian specification of the Western political tradition. The second chapter deals with issues of party organization: status, relationship between central

headquarters and local organizations, hierarchy, alternative liberal societies such as The Liberals' Circle of Studies, the women's group, and the Youth's group. The third chapter represents a minute analysis of clichés put into circulation mainly by Ștefan Zeletin's books, *Burghezia Română. Originea și rolul ei istoric* [*The Romanian Bourgeoisie. The origin and Its Historical Role*] (1925) and *Neoliberalismul. Studiu asupra istoriei și politicii burgheziei românești* [*The Neoliberalism. A Study on the History and Politics of the Romanian Bourgeoisie*] (1927). Assuming that the social classes are not closed realities, especially in the context of "fluid modernity", Ovidiu Buruiană rejects the hypothesis according to which there is a determination between *bourgeoisie* and *Romanian Liberalism*. Historically and sociologically speaking, the existence of a Romanian bourgeoisie is highly debatable (pp. 259-262). For instance, "bourgeoisie" meant for the interwar statistics those "heads of family who are able to organize and conduct work" (p. 262). Consequently, a Liberal theorist such as Mihail Manoilescu notices that, in comparison with the Western bourgeois (who is, by and large, an apocalyptic spirit), the Romanian bourgeois still conceives of oneself as a teacher of masses, as a vector of political literacy. In reality, the Romanian Liberals did not construct and deliver their ideological certainties through mere reliance to a social class. As everywhere in the Eastern and Central-European space, they relied on "enrobed elites", on "state intellectuals" who were highly dependent on the discourse of power, both as producers and as consumers.

The fourth chapter brings to the fore the complex entanglement of politics, biology, ethnology, and economy. Briefly put, the political community of the Romanian Liberals is presented as a complex family-tree. Thus, the common interests (formulated under contextual conditions) are given a transcendent determination in the blood-ties. Thus, it is not the transcendence of abstract political ideas the engine that pushes forward the party machine. In this context, Ovidiu Buruiană addresses the theories of communal families ("*zadruga*"), introduced by Philip E. Mosely (*Communal Families in the Balkans: The Zadruga*, 1976) and developed by Karen Barkey (*Bandits and Bureaucrats. The Ottoman Route to State Centralization*, 1994). Compared to the "tribe" – a label that is actually recurrent in all the documents describing the lifestyle of the Brătianus, *zadruga* is a community with quasi-religious habits that defines the Balkan political culture. Its agents (members of the enlarged family) are apt to organize themselves publicly into a circuit of loyalty. Working as a "prebendary, neo-patrimonial elite", *zadruga* represents a superior political structuring, enhanced by a sort of corporate identity. On a smaller scale, it seems to actualize the Renaissance ideal of the *body politic*.

The fifth chapter tackles with the "medialization" of the liberal Forms of Life (party life and family life). Ovidiu Buruiană is interested chiefly in the press, but also in pamphlets, calendars, electoral publications and editions of political speeches. Generally, the liberal propaganda observes the rule of concentric diffusion. Well-informed case studies are devoted to newspapers such as *Viitorul*, *L'Independence Roumaine*, *Națiunea*, *Ordinea*, *Universul* and *Democrația*. The sixth chapter focuses on the marginal figures, that is, on the few dissidents and dissident factions that were active among the Liberals. It is quite natural that, being structured according to a "corporeal" philosophy, the liberal community should dismiss the very idea of dissidence. "The triple legitimacy – the party's tradition, the leader's omnipotence and the administrative elites' capacities – as well as the lack of a credible political competitor entailed the fact that the Liberal Party did not experience significant instances of dissidence before 1930" (p. 582).

As previous research has shown, the Romanian Liberals' "doctrine" should be defined by addressing issues of social class (the financial bourgeoisie), geographical space (The United Principalities, thus the small Romania before 1918), historical evolution of the Romanian nation, and of economy (Vintilă Brătianu's idea of self-sustainability phrased as "prin noi înșine" ["through ourselves"]). Yet, not the ideas but the Liberals' particular way of articulating political identity, thus "certainty", is here a question of interest. The imitation of the leader's messianic figure and its reduplication in the marginal spaces operates as a factor of communitarian cohesion. While the socialization provided by family life also delivered within the liberal community a pattern of acceptable imitation and reduplication, it is no wonder that the Brătianus became the object of hero-

worship. The religious piety encircling the Brătianu family acts as a conducting wire. Traditional paternalism is transferred to modern electors through the harmless figures of family life.

The author notices several times that both the “mysticism” of substantiated ideas and the charismatic leadership characterize the Romanian society, which, in spite of institutional modernization, is still indebted to obsolete cultural codes (pp. 21-26, 496). Following Max Weber’s ideas and their recent elaboration in the works of Charles Lindholm, Chiara Bottici, and Jaepil Choi, Ovidiu Buruiană considers that, for the Romanian Liberals, the theme of self-characterization is one of the strongest discursive traits. This becomes extremely relevant for the history of Romanian liberalism, especially if one relates it with the changes of approach occurred throughout Europe at the turn of the century, when sociologists such as Moisei Ostrogorski (1902) and Robert Michaels (1911) warned on “the oligarchic drifting” of 19th century traditional parties.

Nevertheless, “the mysticism” of an embodied liberalism during the interwar period should not be understood as a stance of doctrinarian transcendentalism, but as the theorization of a perennial framework within which the Romanian Liberal Party evolves. Its observance of hierarchical “organization” and party “discipline” has become a commonplace consideration among historians. But, albeit its specificity, Romanian liberalism should be also canvassed within the context of “liquid modernity”, which makes doctrinarian differentiation a strategy of pushing back the Liberals’ sense of dissolution: the dissolution of the personality cult, the dissolution of former political privileges and electoral rationale, the dissolution of traditional political networking, the dissolution of a patented rhetoric and so forth. For instance, when he discusses I.I.C. Brătianu’s personality cult, the author draws a subtle line between its posthumous career and the party’s nostalgia after previous political power (p. 486). Owing to Svetlana Boym’s distinction from *The Future of Nostalgia* (2001), I cannot but notice that the Liberals’ memory and its rituals evince not only the traits a “restorative nostalgia” but also the ones of a “reflexive nostalgia”. The latter is discernible in the intense medialization of all political emotions, in the cultic approach of the Brătianus’ lifestyle, and in the transfiguration of Florica domain into an emotional geography. This nostalgic recalling of both founding fathers and decisive historical moments represents the Liberals’ way of fighting against the modern idea of time, against the corrosive process of symbolic dissemination.

Thus, it is not by chance that the Liberals’ political sociability hosts several paradoxical instances. While liberalism stems from the core values of freedom and individuality, the Romanian version of the doctrine appears to stem from the maximalist meaning of concepts such as “nation” and “state”. Similarly, if liberalism meant essentially to rely on the idea of human progress and universal brotherhood, Romanian liberalism delivered itself to a sectarian spirit, which fed from the cult of the dead, from funeral ceremonies, and from the obstinate appeal to past events. In the same manner, even if from a theoretical viewpoint Romanian liberalism prophesied democracy, the party members had to admit that granting the peasants the right to vote was a measure whose effects in terms of electoral mathematics should be rather avoided. Also, for the Romanian Liberals, egalitarianism actually meant a disciplinarian spirit applied equally to common people, and not equal rights and liabilities for all Romanian citizens.

Written with a mature sense of data incorporation, keeping a reasonable distance from its subject(s) and showing an appetite for complex interrogation, Ovidiu Buruiană’s book represents a solid groundwork for further research on political sociability.

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SANDA CORDOȘ (ed.), *Spiritul critic la Cercul literar de la Sibiu [The Critical Spirit in the Sibiu Literary Circle]*, Cluj-Napoca, Accent, 2009, 275 p.

An anthology of 26 presentations selected from the conference held in 2008 in Cluj-Napoca, at the Faculty of Letters, on the critical spirit and the topicality of the Sibiu Literary Circle, the volume edited by Sanda Cordoș establishes the relevance and substantiality of the concept of “interpretive communities”, while it also discloses its inescapable theoretical and practical vulnerability.

On the one hand, as Cordoș emphasizes in the *Argument*, the Sibiu Literary Circle, which included critics and essayists such as Ion Negoïtescu, Nicolae Balotă, Ovidiu Cotruș, Radu Enescu, Cornel Regman, Eugen Tudoran, and poets, novelists, playwrights and translators such as Ștefan Aug. Doinaș, Ion D. Sîrbu, Radu Stanca, Eta Boeriu, is “the longest lasting literary-critical group of Romanian culture” (p. 7) and the only one that “has a collective conscience and aims for a particular cultural direction” (p. 8). Therefore, the Circle is distinguished by its “catalytic” dimension owing to the “genuine emulation and effervescence” awakened among congeners and future generations (p. 8). Homogeneity, longevity and a specific “force of radiation” are the central features Nicolae Balotă uses in his essay, *Literary Circle in the 21st Century*, in order to define the group. Although “historically determined”, the founding principles of the Circle (anti-nationalism, anti-regionalism, anti-orthodoxism, Europeanization, democratization) are, in Balotă’s opinion, “anti-historically oriented”, becoming “absolute standpoints” (p. 12). However, the last surviving member of the Circle considers that this “vocation of the absolute” should not be equated exactly with “aestheticism”, i.e. “absolutizing the aesthetic value”, just because his colleagues plead constantly for conjugating aesthetic and moral values as an antidote to the “amorality” of Romanian culture and society. Repudiating both the Fascist or Leninist-Stalinist movements (to which they adhere only accidentally) and the literature of crisis glorified in 20th century Western Europe, the members of the Sibiu Literary Circle lived the utopia of achieving a “Romanian Classicism”, believed in “the redemptive value of art”, developed a kind of “literary mysticism”, which tends to be more and more “paradigmatic for the new literary configuration ready to be constituted in the 21st century” (pp. 17-18). Balotă’s perspective is akin to the plea of the American professor of Romanian origin, Virgil Nemoianu, for understanding the “philosophical and aesthetic harmony” promoted by the Circle beyond the strictly literary-cultural system. His study, *Literary Circle between Idyllicism and Critical Spirit*, shows how, by intertwining the idyllic model (as a “symbol of moderation”) with the “inclination to criticize” (generated by the dissatisfaction that the “hard and crude” historical reality undermines the transformation of Transylvania into a “spiritual and aesthetic province”), the Sibiu Literary Circle provides a social model not at all utopian, valid even to solve the discontinuities or ruptures the contemporary world is facing. The literary group offers a theoretical and practical example of how a community could cross the regional, national and continental boundaries, might join avant-garde and existentialist visions, the Mediterranean and Christian Antiquity, the German “illuminated” romanticism, and the tradition of French classical and modern culture, or it can place the “aesthetic and intellectual values” above any ethnic, psychological or social differences, in order to adhere to a “liberal and conservative democracy” (pp. 26-34). The belief that an “aesthetical doctrine” could prompt a broader, social-ideological, impact characterizes the ample synthesis *An Euphorionist Critical Perspective*, offered by Dan Damaschin (one of the most persistent and active editors and researchers of the group), but also the analytic surveys signed by two critics usually associated with Romanian postmodernism: Andrei Bodiș (To Think Different, To Think Against) and Caius Dobrescu (*Can Aestheticism Be Equated to Liberalism? Infrapolitics at Thomas Mann and – especially – at Ion Negoïtescu*). Moreover, many of the case studies, some of them implying an obvious encomiastic intention, emphasize the ability of the Sibiu Literary Circle to enforce a “style”, a “school”, a “model” or a creative and interpretative “standard”. Representatives of the Romanian new critical generation such as Crina Bud, Xenia Karo-Negrea, Daniel Cristea-Enache or Antonio

Patraş, praise the literary critic Ion Negoïţescu, a “Dionysian hermeneutist”, respectively the novelist Ion D. Sîrbu, a former socialist, later an enemy of communism, while the esteemed Cluj-Napoca professor and literary critic Ion Pop evokes the figure of the “major poet” Ştefan Aug. Doinaş. On the other hand, Laura Pavel approaches the comparative criticism and theory developed by Nicolae Balotă, in her essay entitled *The Canon and the Critical Fiction*, arguing that Balotă’s “anthropological hermeneutics” goes beyond an aesthetically based approach on literature. Thus, the Sibiu Literary Circle earns the position of a social, spiritual and interpretative community; while not ideal, it is at least a fascinating community, able to turn into a disciple any reader who can perceive its critical spirit.

On the other hand, there is also a consistent number of convincing articles that relativize or challenge the Circle members' capability to institute stable, uniform and homogenous principles or a genuine artistic influence. For instance, young researcher from Sibiu Andrei Terian demonstrates in *“The New Critical Direction” of the Sibiu Literary Circle – the 1966-1969 Moment* that the critical impact of the movement in the 1940s was “nostalgically” overvalued, being, in reality, “almost zero” (p. 104). Only the late 1960s consecrated the group as promoter of a “new critical direction”. At that time, the former members of the Sibiu Literary Circle had coagulated around a cultural magazine from Oradea, *Familia*, and took active part to the main critical debate of the communist era. Their opponents were the young critics of the sixties, followers of the interpretative model of the most important Romanian literary critic and historian G. Călinescu, namely the so-called “ineffable”, “spontaneous”, “creative” and “stylistically charming”, but completely devoid of “theoretical foundation” and “aesthetic-philosophical framework” literary criticism. However, as Terian emphasizes, although Balotă, Negoïţescu, Regman and Cotruş postulated the overthrow of an outdated cultural model, due the political circumstances, they could only return to Titu Maiorescu and Eugen Lovinescu’s theoretical projects, two critical patterns configured before Călinescu. Thus, the promised renewal of the critical methodologies failed. The same perspective is supported by another young literary critic, Alex Goldiş, who highlights in his article, *The First Postwar Critical Debate. “New Criticism” vs. Sibiu Literary Circle*, that, “without innovative or original theoretical programs”, investing all their energies in restoring the rather “unpretentious theory of the aesthetic autonomy”, the “new critics” of the 1960s managed to reinstate, even if in part, “the normality in the Romanian literary life”. That is why, the members of the Sibiu Literary Circle had to admit that “directional criticism”, based on complete ideological commitment or on clearly defined and emulative theory, “has never been possible during totalitarianism” (p. 135). Furthermore, the literary critic belonging to the 1980s generation, Al. Cistelean, challenges and denies the critical spirit of the Sibiu Literary Circle. From his perspective, the “euphoric hermeneutists” Eugen Todoran and Nicolae Balotă, the “voluptuous interpretations” embraced by Ion Negoïţescu or Cornel Regman’s excessive rhetorical style exceeded classical literary criticism, enacting a sort of “textual eroticism” (pp. 180-182). The illusions, inconsistencies and contradictions of the Sibiu Literary Circle are focused by some other contributors, from among whom we note Mihai Iovănel (*Cornel Regman. Dogmatism and Post-dogmatism*) and Sorina Sorescu (*Ion D. Sîrbu's Biographical Ambivalences. Between Sibiu Literary Circle and Socialist Realism*).

Such polemical standpoints confirm the main virtue of the volume edited by Sanda Cordoş. Instead of providing stereotypical commemorative tributes, *The Critical Spirit in the Sibiu Literary Circle* undertakes a truly critical radiograph both of the artistic or social reformation power and of the cultural or ideological limitations inscribed in the history of an interpretive community.

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ANCA MANOLESCU, *Modelul Antim, modelul Păltiniș. Cercuri de studiu și prietenie spirituală* [*The Antim Model, the Păltiniș Model. Circles of Study and Spiritual Friendship*], București, Humanitas, 2015, 333 p.

“It’s curious. For those who want to move through life *understanding* both what surrounds them and themselves, culture is (still) the right means, the necessary training. [...]. But when it comes to relating oneself to the transcendent, this education of understanding has ceased appearing to be necessary for several centuries now. It seems to be confusing and even to cloud the “simple faith” that is required of all. When gazing at the highest point of the real, religious man is cautioned that the tools of high culture are of little use to him, that he had better leave them aside and remain a tepid believer, avoiding to be tempted by the “perils” of knowledge. Should he listen?”. It is with that question, formulated in Socratic manner, that Anca Manolescu’s recent book, published in 2015, opens. The problem of the relationship between reason and faith, an age-old subject of contention that dates from the beginnings of Christian thought, appears to be resumed into debate in the most different thematic contexts, this time being approached in an anthropological register. Should one discursively tackle religious problems “in the manner of fishermen,” as Gregory of Nazianzus demanded, or should they be approached through intellectualist contemplativeness, as theorized by Clement and Origen? Scholastic synthesis had the last word in this regard, inaugurating what Mircea Eliade was to call the separation between the sacred and the profane. It is certain that in secularized modernity, as Anca Manolescu notes, the two “continents” of culture and of religion are far apart, each with its own language and themes, in the context of a generalized and increasingly divergent plurality. What is, in these circumstances, the situation of the intellectual concerned with the rapport with the transcendent, with what might generically be referred to as “the meaning of existence”? To be a good religious man, should he discard his specific profile, his exploration of ideas, his qualities and his skills, as if they were an “inappropriate outfit”?

The book does not adopt a polemical stance, nor does it undertake a purely theoretical approach to the issue of the divorce between reason and faith in late modernity, but conducts a foray into an alternative model of thought, the one represented by the concrete example of study circles, where “philosophizing” and religion converge towards common meanings. The atmosphere, “their existential fabric”, the dialogical routes, the type of group cohesion, conviviality, cohabitation models, shared research practices, relationships with the outside, the typology of masters – all these arouse the author’s interest. In other words, she is interested in what a “being-unto-knowledge” is like, seeing such a human as the medium where “knowledge observes itself, where it investigates and explains itself”. This is not a discourse on knowledge, but a portrait of knowledge that has become interrelational discourse, in its most vibrant reality, populated by different characters, places, circumstances and languages. Although it is a scholarly undertaking, based on a variety of philosophical, theological, historical, philological and sociological sources, ranging from classical texts to spiritual journals, biographies and correspondence, sometimes unpublished before, the book is targeted at specialists, but at intellectuals of sundry backgrounds, who can sense the limits of their own areas of interest, whatever these might be. The modern intellectual and the Socratic man meet, thus, through a transversal reading of the history of ideas, just like study circle members communicate at the level of “hard reality”, through confluences and similitudes, whether we speak of Constantin Noica, Andrei Scrima or Origen, Epicurus and other thinkers of the late Antiquity. The same unity of essence draws them together, through the verticality of their inner selves.

What may be vexing, at first glance, in Anca Manolescu’s study is the heterogeneity of the texts and of the illustrative profiles she has commented on, as these transgress historical, geographical and cultural boundaries, in a seemingly disconcerting openness. The two central examples – represented by the Antim Circle and by the School of Păltiniș, one religious, the other philosophical, which are reconstructed on the basis of the testimonies given by Andrei Scrima in *Timpul Rugului Aprins* and

by Gabriel Liiceanu in *Jurnalul de la Păltiniș* and in *Epistolar* – are placed in dialogue with the groups of Origen, Pythagoras, Gregory Thaumaturgus, Iamblichos, Apollonius from Thyana, Evagrius, etc. What do they all have in common, the author asks, what continuity is there between Antim and the old Christian circles, what did Păltiniș retrieve from the ancient schools of philosophy, especially since Noica, as is well known, was pursuing “not divine transcendence”, but the “firmament of high culture”? Beyond an identical intellectual effervescence, animated by the “easy air of friendship”, by the similarity of the type of hermeneutics and contextual relationships, philosophy and religion basically have the same object and the same goal: the expansion of Being in its relation with a higher Truth, with a view to so-called “happy life”. Antim would be the religious version, while Păltiniș – the secular version of such an “outing into openness”. We find here the ancient meaning of *theoria*, explained by Anton Dumitriu in *Philosophia mirabilis* and other texts: “placement into Being”, different from the discourse about Being characteristic of modern philosophy.

Against the horizon of this “openness” looms the entire analytical discourse devoted to the various study circles, animated, in turn, by the desire to identify a “crossings and bridges” between various paradigms, in order to accede to a possible universal fund of high culture and spirituality. Release into “the regime of freedom”, beyond religious, cultural or “highly specialized” boundaries is the first characteristic of these study groups. The Antim circle gathered together writers, theologians, scientists, philosophers, etc., each seeking, through their formation, support, analogies, “symbolic matter” for understanding faith. The Păltiniș School enjoyed the interest of an audience that also came from a heterogeneous environment. According to the tradition of spiritual study circles of all time, there are no differences by gender, rank, denominational affiliation or of any other kind: “For such people, the universal had no religious colour, it did not have to cloister itself within the limits of a single school, doctrine, tradition or religion”. Prestigious intellectual groups of the 20th century, such as the Eranos Circle or the circle that was set up by Henry Corbin in Paris, pursued the same kind of “crossings and bridges”, in the spirit of the old Renaissance aspiration towards the unity of knowledge. Multidisciplinarity, interdisciplinarity and, above all, transdisciplinarity, based on the ideal of “transhumanism”, gained shape against a similar background. Romanian transmodernism found in the model of the School of Păltiniș a precursor of this orientation, according to Theodor Codreanu (*Transmodernismul*, Iași, Junimea, 2005, p.186). The total criticism of G. Călinescu, G. Ibrăileanu and M. Ralea, Mircea Eliade’s hermeneutics of religions times of Blaga’s cultural model anticipated the same trend.

What is significant for the purposes of such openings is the recurrence of the particle “trans” throughout the study, along with the insistence on the concept of “interval” or “threshold”, as symbolic space with ontological and epistemological value. Collegiality establishes a “trans-personal” link, groups members play “transindividual” roles, in order to adhere to the “transrational” transcendent. The “Burning Bush” lies, according to the testimony of André Scrima, not in contingent history, but “in the area of those meanings that traverse history and maintain its vertical openness”, in Corbin calls “subtle time”. The meeting place of the members of study circles pertains to the “atopic” symbolism of the threshold, as a non-geographical space converted, through a “level rift,” into spiritual experience. The group itself is “a space of alterity in the midst or close to the city”, a “transcending marginality”, a place left ajar between the elite and the general public, with a discourse like “an interface, like a threshold” and with twofold characteristics: “universality and immediacy”. The master, in turn, is a “transindividual, liminal” being, beyond any pigeonholing category. This is, however, a threshold that unites, lays down bridges towards a plurality of meanings, discernible through a transversal reading, at the limit of different types of discourse.

Anca Manolescu’s anthropological study is a transdiscourse, too, placed at the interface between disciplinary spaces, interpretive horizons and expressive structures, generically gathered under the sign of “creative memory”. The “being-onto-knowledge”, itself a limit-concept, expresses itself through an alternation of narrative plans, voices and perspectives, interpretable on at least four interwoven levels of reading: conceptual, critical, fictional and essayistic. The philosophical discourse

from the first level, centred on the question of the relationship between knowledge and faith, is accompanied by long essayistic disquisitions on the meeting places of the group members, their typology, the relationship between orality and writing, etc. A certain fictional aura is sometimes inserted in the structure of the discourse, through the art of the portrait or the creation of atmosphere, oscillating between picturesqueness and evanescence. At this level, the book can be read as a novel of ideas, as a metadiscourse predicated on a variety of “dossiers of existence”, each with its own style. André Scrima, for example, is like a character from the 18th century, “from that age of the Old Court Libertines, familiar with all the centres of rare knowledge”. The Antim group was constituted around a mysterious monk, Ioan cel Străin [John the Stranger], portrayed through the same symbology of otherness. The formation and dissolution of the group is evoked, by reference to the sources, in an objective register, not devoid of Romanian accents. The philosophical and essayistic undertaking is doubled, in a programmatic way, by the real stories of the characters, under the aegis of a fictionality that is inherent to the confessional discourse commented on. Equally obvious, however, is the careful and critical intervention of the author’s gaze, which maintains an oftentimes ironical distance from the object. While she recomposes critically, from her point of view, the variety of testimonials, the author operates classifications and distinctions, in order to accurately capture all the nuances of discourse. A generous space is reserved, in the study, to the typology of expressive “stylization” in the texts referring to the study circles. There are examples of realistic exemplarism, where lucidity and irony enhance the apologetic tone, as in the case of the evocations of André Scrima and Gabriel Liiceanu; allegorical exemplarism, illustrated in the texts dedicated to the “therapists” gathered around Philo of Alexandria or the members of the circle of Gregory Thaumaturgus, where the triumphant, opinionated tone prevails. All these interpretive insights converge towards a group portrait of the spiritual circle, reconstituted at the interface of subjective perspectives, in all their diversity.

What is the situation of the “being-onto-knowledge” today, manifesting itself in the space of dialogue and orality, through vertically oriented “social interaction”? Does the circle of study and spiritual friendship have any reverberations in actuality? Unlike George Steiner, who contended that the master and apprentice institution would survive into the era of digital civilization (*Maestri și discipoli*, translated by Virgil Stanciu, București, Compania, 2005), Anca Manolescu notices that today study circles grouped around a spiritual master have vanished from the life of the city, replaced by simple circles of colleagues, devoid of a tutelary authority. In other words, the circle descends from the old “speculative castle” into quotidian mundaneness. The “inconveniences” and the “handicaps” of our time also include, however, valuable incentives: for instance, the fact that the participants in this new type of circles have become more offensive, more creative, under the imperative of discovering meaning on their own, through a direct confrontation with the texts of tradition. Inserted in the daily mundane, spiritual concerns are prompted to retrieve their verticality starting from the present moments, in the “natural manner of a Socrates”. This research is itself rooted, at least in part, in this tendency to transpose the speculative approach into the “daily mundaneness” of lived ideas.

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IULIA POPOVICI (ed.), *Sfârșitul regiei, începutul creației colective în teatrul european. The End of Directing, the Beginning of Theatre-Making and Devising in European Theatre*, Cluj-Napoca, Tact, 2015, 325 p.

Le mérite principale de l'anthologie éditée par le critique de théâtre Iulia Popovici, lancée l'année passée dans le cadre du Festival International de Théâtre qui a eu lieu à Sibiu, tient du fait qu'elle arrive à cartographier un phénomène de plus en plus prégnant dans la spectacologie contemporaine, sans avoir pour autant la prétention ni de le présenter de manière exhaustive, ni de se prononcer sur ses limites esthétiques et extra-esthétiques : la fin des hiérarchies dans le théâtre européen. La sélection des textes se fait précisément d'après le refus des auteurs à indiquer, de manière prescriptive, la finalité artistique/ politique/ sociale de la création collective dans le théâtre européen. Les auteurs signalent la mutation qui s'est produite dans le processus de production, l'analysent, la contextualisent et l'exemplifient, sans pour autant formuler des sentences.

La dispersion de l'autorité dans l'acte de création, comme les mutations qu'a supportées le concept de l'auctorialité ont créé les prémisses d'une évolution multiple, à tel point complexe et subtile qu'il devient plus adéquat de la questionner que de la définir. Or, *Sfârșitul regiei, începutul creației colective în teatrul european. The End of Directing, The Beginning of Theatre-Making and Devising in European Theatre* a toutes les qualités pour devenir une référence dans la bibliographie de spécialité : elle articule des questions et des curiosités et suggère également des réponses, à partir des expériences particulières des auteurs, différentes surtout du point de vue géographique.

Malgré le titre, qui prévoit sur un ton un peu tragique la fin de la domination du metteur en scène sur les scènes européennes contemporaines, le volume ne se constitue pas dans un nécrologue, mais radiographie un phénomène vivant, évolutif, qui implique et intègre l'art régisoral dans de nouvelles conditions de travail.

On y fait l'usage de deux notions différentes, qui correspondent à deux aspects du phénomène discuté. Il s'agit, d'une part, de la question de la « création spectacle », qui amène à l'esquisse de la figure de l'« auteur de théâtre », qui s'occupe lui-même de la mise en scène de ses pièces, et parfois, y joue aussi. La personnalité de celui-ci, en apparence schizoïde, intègre des fonctions et des responsabilités différentes, à contrepoint de la hiérarchie traditionnellement acceptée dans le processus scénique. De l'autre part, on discute le problème de la genèse et de la prolifération de ce qu'on appelle *Devised Theatre*, avec ses diverses variations sémantiques et formelles selon l'espace culturel duquel se revendique le produit théâtral. Cependant, ces deux modalités de production s'entrecroisent ; souvent elles se superposent même, parce que la grande majorité des manières de travail citées, ci-inclus les interviews avec les producteurs, supposent un travail collaboratif, qui suppose l'implication directe, et ne tient pas compte de la hiérarchie des acteurs/ performeurs.

Le volume est structuré sur deux sections. La première inclut quatre études qui suivent dans le théâtre européen les pratiques artistiques qui font l'objet de l'anthologie, s'appuyant sur des cas pris dans des zones culturelles différentes, choisis en fonction de leur relevance, mais sans l'ambition d'une absolue représentativité. La deuxième partie se constitue comme une collection d'interviews avec de divers « auteurs » de spectacle, avec une seule exception, celle d'un essai sur la création théâtrale de Sylvain Creuzevault. Cette partie seconde du volume approfondit et particularise les incursions générales et théoriques dans le théâtre européen contemporain discutées dans la première section.

Le texte signé par Duška Radosavljević, utilisant un filtre comparatif, offre une vision ample sur l'évolution des formes de création collective et sur les métamorphoses de l'auctorialité dans le contexte européen. Le placement de ce texte en ouverture du volume est stratégique. Synthétique, il se propose, entre autres, de familiariser le lecteur avec les particularités des modes de productions théâtrales, d'une manière presque didactique. L'une des observations les plus importantes est liée à la fragilité sémantique du terme *devising*, compris en fonction du statut du texte de spectacle dans

l'espace culturel qui adopte le concept. Duška Radosavljević part des commentaires de Andy Field concernant la personnalisation inévitable de la notion de *devised* par la grande majorité des artistes qui pratiquent des méthodes collaboratives et arrive à signaler la confusion que suscitent certaines interprétations trop restrictives du terme. « Dans l'ensemble, abandonner le terme „*devising*” dans le théâtre contemporain et dans le discours performatif pourrait être bénéfique surtout parce que son inflation dans la Grande Bretagne a entraîné dans toute une série de fausses interprétations. D'abord son opposition implicite et dichotomique par rapport au théâtre de texte tend à créer des confusions pour les européens du Continent [...]. Encore plus important, l'usage excessif du texte dans le contexte britannique a produit la fusion des notions de *devising* et de troupe jusqu'à rendre implicite l'idée que c'est la troupe qui fait le théâtre *devised* et que seulement de manière exceptionnelle on arrive à travailler avec les pièces et des dramaturges. Si on prend pourtant en compte la dissolution de la dichotomie “théâtre de texte” – „théâtre *devised*”, on devrait se rapporter à cette pratique plutôt comme à une méthodologie créative ubi-que, et non pas comme à un type de spectacle qui ne se construit pas à partir d'un texte » (p. 21).

L'idée qui s'articule clairement dans l'essai de Duškai Radosavljević se retrouve, dans des formulations moins explicites, dans le reste du volume : il est risquant de nous rapporter aux pratiques réunies sous le signe du *devising*, de la « création collective » ou du théâtre « d'auteur » comme à des modèles déjà donnés, universellement valables et inflexibles. La qualité de telles formules artistiques consiste dans le fait même qu'elles ne tiennent pas compte de l'organisation du processus de création théâtrale sur des bases hiérarchiques, selon le principe de la division rigoureuse des responsabilités à l'intérieur de l'équipe artistique, réunie autour de la figure autoritaire d'une seule personnalité. Duškai Radosavljević souligne donc l'existence d'un facteur politique dans la genèse et l'évolution, depuis les années 1960 jusqu'à nos jours, de la démocratisation du processus artistique et de la définition de l'idée d'auctorialité.

Les essais signés par Andrea Tompa, Jean-Pierre Thibaudat et Iulia Popovici représentent des radiographies de la figure du metteur en scène-dramaturge dans trois espaces géographiques et culturelles différents : la Hongrie, la France et la Roumanie. Toutes prégnantes que seraient les différences formelles et les conjectures sociales qui avaient générés les mouvements théâtraux dans ces territoires, les trois cas présentent des similitudes étonnantes au niveau des méthodologies testées par les créateurs de théâtre. Peu importe qui est l'auteur de spectacle visé – Pintér Béla, Pommerat ou Gianina Cărbunariu, il s'approprie des rôles multiples dans le processus de création et renverse de l'intérieur les principes traditionnels d'organiser une troupe de théâtre. Il est intéressant, de ce point de vue, de retenir une des affirmations de Andrea Tompa concernant le metteur en scène-acteur-dramaturge Pintér Béla: « Découpé directement du théâtre d'amateurs, dans une tradition alternative (qui provient des danses folkloriques hongroises), où ces pratiques sont habituelles, Pintér a longuement lutté pour se faire accepter en tant que dramaturge. Comme acteur, son talent n'avait jamais été mis en question [...]. Il a été d'ailleurs assez vite accepté comme metteur en scène aussi. Mais en tant que dramaturge, les critiques mainstream lui ont recommandé qu'il apprenne à écrire ou, sinon, qu'il invite un vrai écrivain à travailler avec lui [...]. L'idée de l'acteur-metteur en scène ou celle l'écrivain-metteur en scène sont quelque chose assez difficile à digérer » (p. 35).

La dernière phrase laisse percevoir la difficulté que ressent le spectateur éduqué et nourri avec des formules artistiques sages, traditionnelles, de s'adapter aux mutations radicales qui se produisent au cœur même de l'*establishment* théâtral. En Roumanie, où la figure du metteur en scène dominait, jusque il y a très peu de temps, depuis le sommet de la pyramide hiérarchique, la scène contemporaine, la dissolution de l'autorité de celle-ci, sa décomposition dans plusieurs autorités constitutives, tout comme la démocratisation du processus de travail représentent un choc encore plus grand. Comme le dit clairement Iulia Popovici, le statut du théâtre indépendant roumain est plutôt marginal, en opposition avec le *mainstream* revendiqué par les institutions, pendant que la précarité des moyens de production se fait responsable, indirectement, non seulement des tendances thématiques et esthétiques des œuvres produites à l'intérieur de ce système, mais aussi de l'apparition de « l'écrivain-metteur en scène ». Né d'une nécessité concrète et prosaïque, celui-ci doit survivre et

est obligé de se découvrir le spécifique dans un monde hostile, habitué à reconnaître comme sérieux et important seulement ce qui est attesté par la tradition. Par conséquent, le créateur de théâtre réagit par l'assimilation et la représentation des causes politiques et sociales qui impliquent sa marginalité.

Les deux interviews qui constituent la deuxième section du volume esquissent une image assez agréable du metteur en scène-dramaturge, à travers les voix des artistes qui ont assumé les deux rôles, de manière programmatique ou par nécessité : Joël Pommerat, Rodrigo García, Kornél Mundruczó, Wojtek Ziemilski, Armin Petras (Fritz Kater), Nurkan Erpulat, Gianina Cărbunariu, Bogdan Georgescu et Catinca Drăgănescu. Le fil rouge de ces confessions auto-réflexives le représente, d'une part, le besoin des artistes de se détacher des formes théâtrales conventionnelles à l'ombre desquelles ils avaient commencé leurs carrières, et, de l'autre part, leur générosité par rapport à leur propre équipe. Leur besoin et leur désir de renoncer aux privilèges du metteur en scène en faveur d'une procédure ouverte et démocratique – sont les thèmes récurrents de tous les interviews. Le lecteur peut ainsi se convaincre du fait que ce personnage complexe, le créateur de théâtre, n'est point une figure autoritaire et que le processus de création ne devient pas, sous son influence, un acte discrétionnaire. Par contre, le metteur en scène-acteur intègre dans sa manière de travail des techniques qui tiennent de *Devised Theatre* et insiste sur la nature collaborative de la production des spectacles.

L'anthologie coordonnée par Iulia Popovici offre ainsi aux hommes de théâtre roumains (et pas seulement à eux) la possibilité de se familiariser avec un phénomène contemporain. Bien que l'efficacité du volume ne pourra en vrai se mesurer que suivant les discussions qu'il va susciter parmi les professionnels, il a certainement les qualités pour convaincre ses lecteurs de l'importance de la transformation systématique des modes de production dans le théâtre contemporain.

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IOAN STANOMIR, *Junimea și pasiunea moderației*
[*Junimea et la passion de la modération*], București,
Humanitas, 2013, 135 p.

Placé intellectuellement sur les positions du libéralisme-conservateur, Ioan Stanomir revient – à distance d'un siècle des événements – au *junimisme*, dont l'imaginaire idéologique et politique est « revisité » dans le volume *Junimea și pasiunea moderației* [*Junimea et la passion de la modération*], București, Humanitas, 2013). Professeur réputé de droit constitutionnel et spécialiste dans l'histoire des doctrines juridiques en Roumanie au XIX^{ème} siècle, l'auteur a été consacré par une thèse concernant l'évolution du „langage constitutionnel” dans les Principautés jusqu'à 1866 (publiée sur le titre *Nașterea constituției. Limbaj și drept în Principate până la 1866* [*La Naissance de la constitution. Langage et droit dans les principautés jusqu'à 1866*], București, Nemira, 2004 ; l'auteur a publié par la suite d'autres synthèses sur le même sujet : *Libertate, lege și drept. O istorie a constituționalismului românesc* [*Liberté, loi et droit. Une histoire du constitutionnalisme roumain*], Iași, Polirom, 2005 ; *În jurul Constituției. Practică politică și arhitectură legală* [*Autour de la Constitution. Pratique politique et architecture légale*], București, Editura Universității din București, 2006). La présente étude fait partie d'un projet plus ample et de long parcours, qui a accompagné et complété la réflexion sur la pensée juridique roumaine au XIX^{ème} par une analyse approfondie des modèles de conduite conservatrice élaborés à la même époque, dont on peut énumérer : *Conștiința conservatoare. Preliminarii la un profil intelectual* [*La Conscience*

conservatrice. Préliminaires à un profil intellectuel], București, Nemira, 2004 ou *Spiritul conservator. De la Barbu Catargiu la Nicolae Iorga* [*L'Esprit conservateur. De Barbu Catargiu à Nicolae Iorga*], București, Curtea Veche, 2008. Dans ces réflexions, Ioan Stanomir poursuit une préoccupation constante pour la formation d'un esprit critique et rationalisant, en parallèle avec le processus de modernisation de la culture nationale émergente.

S'inscrivant dans le même champ de réflexion, *Junimea și pasiunea moderației* prend comme objet la société intellectuelle roumaine la plus importante dans la deuxième moitié du XIX^{ème} siècle. Junimea, dont l'acte de naissance date de 1863, a réuni des jeunes étudiantes qui revenaient en pays après avoir complété leur formation à l'étranger. Animés par le projet d'une refondation de la culture roumaine dans une visée critique et conservatrice, ils ont constitué la principale force intellectuelle dans l'espace public et politique pendant près de trois décennies, jusque vers 1890. Avec une telle durée de vie et un prestige sans égal dans son époque, Junimea a engendré un courant influent, avec des conséquences profondes sur la structure de la société roumaine. Ioan Stanomir n'est pas intéressé par l'histoire politique du mouvement, mais uniquement par la récupération de son idéologie, dans le but d'une meilleure appréhension de sa « grammaire sociale ». La démonstration pivote autour du concept de « modération », à travers lequel l'imaginaire politique est envisagé comme « éthos de l'équilibre et de la prudence », s'éloignant du modèle dichotomique des forces révolutionnaires vs. progressistes, qui sera proposé une cinquantaine d'années plus tard par E. Lovinescu.

En tant que variante autochtone du conservatisme européen, *le junimisme* ne se réduit pas à l'idéologie d'une classe sociale (l'aristocratie), dont il garde les intérêts. Ce qu'il y a de plus profond dans l'action de ce groupement intellectuel, c'est la philosophie de vie communautaire, à l'écart du radicalisme de la Révolution Française. Dans le sillage des textes de Burke, Guizot ou Tocqueville, le patriotisme *junimiste* se fonde sur « l'alliance entre la raison, la liberté politique et la modération. À l'antipode de l'autarchie et du délire patriotard, *le junimisme* valorise ce noyau de décence ignoré par les grands projets totalitaires du XX^{ème} siècle ».

Réfléchissant sur *le junimisme*, Ioan Stanomir propose plus qu'une reconstruction historique – une discussion actualisante sur le sens et les effets à distance d'une action politique et d'un modèle de conduite publique. Un des enjeux les plus importants pour l'auteur de ce livre est la réinterprétation contemporaine de cette « lucidité patriotique » mobilisée par Junimea et de retrouver à présent un rapport pertinent à ce passé significatif. Autrement dit, il s'agit pour Ioan Stanomir de traverser en sens inverse l'histoire de la culture roumaine, tout en contournant l'expérience totalitaire, pour renouer avec l'exemple de la société moldave : « Aristocratique dans un sens supérieur, inaccessible à la esprit de *political correctness* dominant aujourd'hui, Junimea marque le divorce du modèle proposé par la génération des révolutionnaires de 1848, et l'entrée dans l'âge victorien de la culture et de la réflexion idéologique autochtone. Et ce n'est pas par hasard qu'entre 1866 et 1914, l'activité de l'association se confond au règne de celui qui a imprimé à la Roumanie cette gravité glaciale que l'on découvre dans les discours de P.P. Carp ou de Titu Maiorescu. L'époque de Junimea est celle de Carol le 1^{er}, dont la fin de la vie représente la fin d'un parcours qui s'achève dans les tranchées de La Première Guerre Mondiale ».

L'auteur ne se fait pas pourtant de fausses illusions. En sous texte de sa démonstration, on saisit une réflexion sceptique à l'égard des conséquences réelles de ce mouvement qui n'a laissé à la postérité que le souvenir d'un projet d'évolution sociale. Car, force est de reconnaître, qu'un siècle plus tard, la société roumaine n'éprouve plus l'utilité de la raison et de l'esprit critique. En invoquant soit la mystique nationaliste, soit la mythologie du prolétariat, la droite nationaliste-fasciste et la gauche communiste ont condamné la modération *junimiste* sous l'accusation de trahison et de réaction. Aussi, l'actualisation de ce modèle, longtemps accueilli avec indifférence sinon avec hostilité, reste-t-il une des priorités du débat public contemporain. La conclusion de l'étude de Ioan Stanomir, appuyée par une solide démarche d'herméneutique politique, peut s'avérer toujours utile aujourd'hui, pour la compréhension des problèmes qui agitent la société roumaine : « En acceptant la liberté politique, mais tout en refusant l'égalitarisme niveleur, en acceptant les réformes, mais en repoussant l'innovation ambitieuse mais sans fondement préalable, en acceptant l'autonomie

individuelle, mais en cultivant le sentiment de la solidarité organique, ce libéralisme-conservateur prépare, sur le plan des idées et sur celui de la pratique politique, la synthèse sur laquelle se construit au XX^{ème} siècle la pensée si différente en apparence, d'un Raymond Aron, Michael Oakeshott ou Ronald Reagan ».

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DANIEL PUIA-DUMITRESCU, *O istorie a Cenaclului de Luni [A History of the Literary Circle of Monday]*, București, Cartea Românească, 2015, 458 p.

Reliable works were published on the eighties generation of Romanian poets, focusing on the “The Monday Literary Circle” (organized in Bucharest between 1977 – 1983), but the topic addressed by the young critic Daniel Puia-Dumitrescu comes from yet another angle. It is not only a literary reconstitution, but also a social, historical, political one, offering today's perspective on the participants at the literary circle back then, extracted from the Security Archives files and from the press of that time.

Our interest for this research is to observe the functioning of the *interpretive community* concept in the case of an important Romanian literary circle of the '80s, as it is stated in Puia-Dumitrescu's book. The controversial concept linked to the reader-response criticism of the '70s, *the interpretive community*, belonging to the American theorist Stanley Fish, circumscribes the idea that the literary text acquires significance within general cultural concepts that direct individual interpretation. According to him, the interpretive communities give the reader “strategies that are preexistent to the act of reading” and therefore, interpretation is not given by the intrinsic meanings of the text. In order to follow the pertinence of these circumscriptions in the case of the Monday Literacy Circle, we will consider two perspectives. The anthropological view, as proposed by Victor Turner, looks at a community as taking part of an existential threshold through intra-community collaboration. In this regard, we noted that the development steps of this literary circle revealed by the testimonies of the interviewed participants represent coalition forms of an interpretive community and may be looked at as rituals. The other perspective is an historical one, its hypothesis being the idea that the Monday Literacy Circle of the '80s answered to a broad social and political context, that fruitful association with literary purposes was catalyzed by a decisive political background, the social engagement being crucial in this cultural project. The author's hypothesis is that the totalitarian Romanian system accepted such organizations precisely in order to create the illusion of freedom of speech, but, in fact, the vulnerability of such a community was the intended objective.

The 460 pages of the study are structured into three chapters preceded by an introduction that contains arguments for using sociological techniques. The details are accompanied by a grand motivation for the methodological selection. Although compelling, his justifications for the choice of methods seem redundant to us, as seem the ample repeated quotes which explain the concept of study and qualitative method. The study follows three stages: the research of the CNSAS Archives, the interviewing of the Literacy Circle members or retrieving some interviews from various documents of that era or from the books of the literacy circle participants, the student press and some cultural magazines analysis on the researched theme. The first chapter is relevant for the proposed historical perspective, it outlines the socio-political coordinates in which the researched Literary Circle operated and it also illustrates the circumstances of a group of writers in a totalitarian system which

becomes a target supervised by the system. The author pertinently mentions the terms in which it is officially required for the acts of culture to progress, being designed to serve the propaganda ideology and to work mimetically (see the lists of “forbidden words”). The extract from *The framework-regulation of organizing and functioning of the literary and artistic circles and groups* explains the background of the researched event. The presented plan of measures seems eloquent, as it targeted the education of the youth meant to combat the capitalist, retrograde, bourgeois mentality, the idealistic theories or the emigration trends.

The study reviews the means of censorship manifestation in the case of literary creations: demanding to eliminate some paragraphs, changing the title, replacing some expressions considered unsuitable for the potential publication of a text. Monday night reality, that the literary circle members lived and testified about in a solidarity of the stated word, makes this manifestation an *interpretive community* historically determined, with a dynamic that responds to a wider social circumstance. The informative notes related to the interpretable content of the published or about to be published volumes of authors such as Mircea Dinescu, Dan Deşliu, Ileana Mălăncioiu, Mihai Sin, Stelian Tanase, Mariana Marin are eloquent in this regard. Some names in this list appear in the files examined by the researcher in the category of writers with improper attitudes who were granted additional attention. For instance, in connection with Bogdan Ghiu, we find that he is an objective with a writer’s interests who has an entourage of shady individuals. We also note here the context created by Viorel Padina’s act of rebellion with *Appeal to Europe* whose failed intention was to send him to the *Radio Free Europe*, as well as Mariana Marin’s letter to the friends in Iaşi, aired on April 7, 1989 at the same radio station.

In the details about the Literary Circle’s organization and activity, we noticed the existence of ritual elements associated with this form of communion. From the researcher’s reconstruction, a rather coherent ritual with its rules is outlined. The student president (we find out that there were four consecutive students over the years of operation of the Literary Circle) had the task to arrange the meetings, to schedule the readings (following a real marketing project to obtain a memorable effect, as Bogdan Ghiu testifies), to finely direct the activity, to mediate the relationship between the coordinator and the members, to organize the analysis of texts. The meetings began every Monday evening at 7 o’clock with the reading of unpublished young poets, followed by text commenting similar to live dissections, which stretched for at least two hours. The readers, viewers and interpreters are all active participants in the construction of meaning, sometimes even in the construction of the text. The apparent anarchy of hot interpretations of the texts read for the first time wove an interpretative model, the one Fish speaks about. The comments were invariably closed by Nicolae Manolescu, who was invested with the role of mentor that used to speak the last, was not to be interrupted by anyone, at whose sign dissonance quenched and who imposed a valid model of reading. This *communitas* (Victor Turner) brought together young poets who presented their original productions to their first public that decisively validated their value as text creators. The lecture of their own texts, probably coming after weeks of waiting, constituted a threshold which had its ceremoniousness: preparing the role, supporting it, validation of the initiates by their initiators. Daniel Puia-Dumitrescu’s interviewees, former participants in the Literary Circle meetings, define the meetings as a “school of text analysis” (Matei Vişniec), “laboratory” (Doru Mareş), form of life, a space of freedom without censorship, space for “autonomy from the rest of the social life” (Romulus Brancoveanu), a “state of mind” (Ion Buduca). The author discusses here Wittgenstein’s position on communities as a group with its own traditions and religiosity, a form of life with its own social network. Trying to figure out the structure of this group, the author talks also about circles of influence: the first belongs to the “initiators” and constitutes the “hard nucleus” of the group (p. 189), the core group consisting of the best commentators who impose their views: Traian T. Coşovei, Florin Iaru, Radu Călin Cristea, Ion Bogdan Lefter, Viorel Padina, Ion Stratan, Magda Cârneci, Alexandru Muşina, Bogdan Ghiu. The second line belonged to the “initiates”, the third one to the “ordinary members”, and the fourth was that of the participants whose name and number was not constant.

Daniel Puia-Dumitrescu`s study has the virtue of having come into the possession of some truths about the literary circle that created a new poetic paradigm, giving us valid points of view not only on the writers` world of the `80s, but also on the life under Communism in those years. His merit is to have found a balanced voice situated between the confusing opinions of a disputable point of view and the documentary voices skillfully interviewed.

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